

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00
SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
/088 W

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P R 182358Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5899
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT AU PRINCE 3033

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, HA
SUBJECT: PRISONER RELEASES AND IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS
OBSERVANCE

REF: BRIDGETOWN 1934

1. ONE OF THE 21 PRISONERS LISTED IN LETTER AMBASSADOR YOUNG
HANDED TO PRESIDENT DUVALIER (REFTEL) WAS QUIETLY RELEASED
ON AUGUST 16. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT OTHER RELEASES WILL
FOLLOW AS CASES ARE REVIEWED AND THAT SOME OF THE REMAINING
PRISONERS WILL BE PUT ON TRIAL. GOH ACTION WILL BE GRADUAL
AS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WISH TO APPEAR TO BE TOO OBVIOUSLY
RESPONDING TO U.S. PRESSURE.

2. PRISONER RELEASED IS FRANTZ LEROY WHO WAS ARRESTED
JUNE 17, 1977 FOR COMPLICITY IN HELPING A FORMER FELLOW-
PRISONER ESCAPE AND SEEK ASYLUM IN MEXICAN EMBASSY LAST
MARCH. LEROY WAS CONVICTED IN 1975 IN STAMP FRAUD TRIAL
AND WAS AMNESTIED AND RELEASED IN DECEMBER 1976. WE DID
NOT CONSIDER HIS PREVIOUS DETENTION POLITICAL BUT HIS
RECENT ARREST WAS POLITICIZED IN EXILE PRESS BY AL-
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LEGATION ARREST WAS FOR PROVIDING AMERICAN EMBASSY WITH
LIST OF REMAINING POLITICAL PRISONERS AND DESCRIPTION
OF POOR PRISON CONDITIONS. (LEROY, ALTHOUGH IN CONTACT
WITH EMBASSY, HAD IN FACT DECLINED TO DISCUSS EITHER
SUBJECT.)

3. JUST BEFORE AMBASSADOR YOUNG ARRIVED IN HAITI,

EMBASSY LEARNED THAT ANOTHER POLITICAL PRISONER, NORMIL CHARLES, WAS RELEASED ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO. CHARLES, WHO IS IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES, HAD BEEN HELD FOR 15 MONTHS AND EVEN HIS PARENTS DID NOT KNOW WHY HE WAS ARRESTED OR DETAINED.

4. RIGHTS OF NON-POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE ALSO BEING OBSERVED WITH MUCH GREATER CARE. INDEPENDENT RADIO METROPOLE REPORTED THE NAMES THIS MORNING (AUGUST 18) OF ABOUT A DOZEN YOUTHS ARRESTED LAST WEEK IN PETIONVILLE FOR MARIJUANA USE. THE STATION WENT ON TO REPORT THAT THE INDIVIDUALS ARE BEING WELL-TREATED IN PRISON, THAT THEY ARE ALLOWED VISITS FROM THEIR FAMILIES, THAT THEY WILL ALL BE ARRAIGNED INDIVIDUALLY IN THE CIVIL COURT THIS WEEK, THAT THEY WILL BE REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL, AND THAT MOST WILL BE RELEASED PENDING TRIAL. THE STATION'S REPORTER THEN ACTUALLY INTERVIEWED SOME OF THE PRISONERS ABOUT THEIR DRUG USE. THIS REPRESENTS UNPRECEDENTED COOPERATION WITH THE MEDIA BY THE POLICE AS WELL AS UNPRECEDENTED FRANKNESS BY THE MEDIA IN ITS REPORTING.

5. ONE LAST STRAW IN THE WIND. THE AUGUST 17 EDITION OF THE NEW YORK TIMES WITH FRONT PAGE PHOTO OF HAITIAN REFUGEES SEEKING ASYLUM IN MIAMI IS FREELY AVAILABLE IN PORT-AU-PRINCE. ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO, NEWSPAPERS CONTAINING SIMILAR PHOTOS OR STORIES DISPLEASING TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE GOH WERE ROUTINELY CONFISCATED AND NOT DISTRIBUTED IN HAITI. WE DOUBT HAITIANS HAVE WHOLLY ABANDONED THIS PRACTICE BUT THE TREND IS ENCOURAGING.
MEADE

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Message Attributes

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